



1. Ögel walking through the high-ceilinged hammam
2. Relaxation on tap
3. Cooling off by strolling the streets of Istanbul



3



“It is a vulnerable situation that you experience alone, yet collectively alongside the people you share the same space with. It is the pinnacle of being cared for in a healing and feminine way.”

# HEAT WAVE

In a luxuriously restored 16th-century bathhouse at the heart of Istanbul that once served the Ottoman navy, artist Lara Ögel explores an ancient, rejuvenating realm of the senses.

Photographer — Danielle Villasana  
Writer — Alexandra de Cramer

## ANCIENT WISDOM LARA ÖGEL

“The hammam is a full sensory experience taking place in the here and now,” Istanbul-based artist Lara Ögel tells *Konfekt* as she sips a quince sherbet drink at the city’s Kılıç Ali Paşa Hamami. “It has a hygienic purpose but as an artist who flirts with the field of phenomenology, I am interested in the nuances of everyday life that are found here.”

Out of all of the city’s hammams, Ögel favours this pavilion, built in 1583 by Ottoman architect Mimar Sinan. “Being in this space you become part of history,” she says gesturing towards the exposed red-clay-and-mortar walls and the high dome of the ceiling.

Ögel slopes off and reappears, wearing a red and white checked *peshtemal* (bath wrap). She is whisked away to the bathhouse for the hammam ritual. Proceedings begin with a splash of lukewarm water, then Ögel is brought into a steamed dome chamber to lie on a heated, circular marble platform called the *gobektasi*. After lounging and perspiring, it’s time for exfoliation and massage. “This is a cosmic ritual you can’t recreate at home,” says Ögel, who emerges from the treatment nearly an hour later and takes a seat on a divan. “There is the constant sound of water. Then there is the heat and the cold. You feel different kinds of textures: you get scrubbed, then you are covered in soap bubbles. All the while, you are below a starry dome with

slivers of light entering.” She points out that the hammam is the act of shedding skin and emerging as a new, rejuvenated self. “It is unbecoming and becoming at the same time,” says the artist.

Documenting shedding skin and other forms of dust have been part of Ögel’s artistic practice for some time. At her 2018 solo show, *Imtidad*, she invited onlookers to trace the structural residues of the historic Galata Greek School. The school’s journey through time was portrayed in five dust-covered windows retrieved from a depot. The same year, in her work “Mundessa: All Seeds”, Ögel used various media to display flakes of her skin. “The dust in your home is mostly made out of your own skin,” she says. “So I looked at the dust in my house. I filmed it and I collected it. I made a bed out of it.”

For her, the hammam is also an experiment in trust. “You are naked,” she says. “The other people around you are naked as well. It is a super-vulnerable situation that you experience alone, yet collectively alongside the people you share the same space with. There are these women caring for your body, who are as gentle or rough as you want them to be. It is the pinnacle of being cared for in a healing and feminine way.” We gather that she is glad that Istanbul’s hammams are now open to the public after last year’s lockdown. “I am happy they are back,” says Ögel as she strolls off, a woman renewed, along the Bosphorus. — K  
*kilicalipasahamami.com; laraogel.com*

## GREAT UNKNOWN Henrich Barth

“There’s a difference between travelling and exploration,” says Vladimir Trisic, co-founder of skincare brand Heinrich Barth. Its adventure-inspired products are an unscented, unisex range of essentials: a combined cleanser for hair and body, a conditioner, a moisturiser and sunscreen. Serbian-born Trisic and Turin-born Daniele Bernini



certainly know about the itinerant way of life; they lived for years on Mykonos, where they ran a beach taverna. The skincare line was, at first, only stocked in their adjacent boutique but, in 2017, Trisic and Bernini moved to Berlin to build their beauty business. The name is a homage to one of the 19th century’s great German explorers and its font is the same as that on Berlin’s prewar subway signage. Now the duo have decamped to Athens and will open a showroom there soon. — SRO  
*heinrich-barth.com*

IMAGES: Courtesy of L'Amour

## ISLAND EFFECTS Ignae

Ignae is a skincare brand from the Portuguese Azores, a wild, pristine archipelago of nine volcanic islands in the Atlantic that’s home to the highest number of thermal springs in Europe. Ignae sustainably extracts ingredients from the region – some from the crater of an active volcano, Furnas. It’s a lush area boasting thousands of different botanical species. This year, under the direction of new CEO Claire Chung, the brand launched several new products using plant and algae-based solutions. We love the Blue Light complex, which is formulated to protect your skin from computer glare, and the Rich Night serum which contains Bakuchiol, a gentler alternative to retinol. “Our new formulations are clean and vegan, and crafted using biotechnology from the Azores,”

says Chung. “We have developed what’s called an EPC factor, which acts as a delivery vehicle that allows our plant-based active ingredients to go deep into the layers of skin that other products cannot reach, for cellular regeneration.” — SG  
*ignae.com*



## ASK THE DOCTOR Night watch

Vera Stucki-Häusler is a former doctor for Rega, the Swiss air-rescue service, and now runs a private practice in Zürich.

I’ve always been a night owl but now that the party season is upon us, I find myself feeling the pinch at work. I’m not sleeping well and have a sense of deep fatigue. Any tips for staying vital in the winter months?

The fact that we can be productive even at night is shown in Louise Bourgeois’ wonderful “insomnia drawings”. However, most of us have to perform during the day, so this concept is not practical for everyone.

From a medical point of view, sleep is the simplest, cheapest and most efficient way for our bodies and minds to recover. During sleep, important repair mechanisms of the immune system and cells take place.

Sadly, if you’re falling short on vital sleep hours you cannot simply catch up with a lie in. If you snooze for an hour or longer at the weekend, there is probably a chronic deficiency at play and you should think about going to bed an hour earlier.

If you’re not getting quality sleep, then you might need to change a few habits. Our metabolisms have complex interactions with our melatonin balance, so regular mealtimes and bedtimes have a positive effect on our sleep rhythm.

Even though wine is said to have a relaxing and sleep-inducing effect, it can negatively influence or even disturb the sleep phases. Caffeine can also have a stimulating effect for more time than expected. If you’re not nodding off, it may be worthwhile to avoid these substances as early as the afternoon, especially during stressful periods. Of course, there’s melatonin, taken as a drug, which seems to have measurable benefits. However, it’s not recommended as a long-term therapy.

Instead, it’s proven that plenty of daylight has a positive effect, especially in winter. So frequent walks in the fresh air are advisable. In the evening, too much exposure to light (including screens) should be avoided.

So get out into the fresh air, give the inbox a rest in the evening and avoid excessive dinners. And if a good sleep still doesn’t come, stay relaxed and, like Bourgeois, open the sketchbook and draw. — K

